

PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE

Wednesday 28 September 2011

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Brett (Chair), Armitage, Baxter, Rowley, Young, Clarkson, Coulter and McCready.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Lois Stock (Democratic Services Officer), Martin Armstrong (City Development), Steven Roberts (City Development) and Daniel Smith (Law and Governance)

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Turner (Councillor Coulter substituted), Councillor Bance (Councillor Clarkson substituted), Councillor Altaf-Khan (Councillor McCready substituted) and Councillor Lygo (no substitute).

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor McCready made a statement regarding the planning application for Grove Street Summertown. Although he had previously agreed to speak on behalf of the residents objecting to the application, at this meeting he was substituting for Councillor Altaf-Khan, and as a member of the Committee was approaching the issue with an open mind.

19. PLANNING APPLICATION 11/01165/FUL - GROVE STREET, SUMMERTOWN

The Head of City Development submitted a report concerning the following planning application:

Demolition of existing building. Erection of two storey terrace (with accommodation in roof space) comprising 1 x 4-bed house and 3 x 3-bed houses. Provision of off street parking, bin and cycle storage. (Amended Plans and Description) – 11/01165/FUL – Grove House Club, Grove Street, Summertown.

At its meeting on 5th July 2011 West Area Planning Committee resolved to support the application and asked that condition 17 be altered to grant entitlement to visitor parking permits.

This item was subsequently called in from the West Area Planning Committee by Councillors Fooks, Armitage, Campbell, Brown, Wilkinson, McCready, Benjamin, Brundin, Brett, Royce, Young and Wolff for the following reasons: *plans appear to be gross overdevelopment, leading to very unsatisfactory quality of accommodation for the residents and unacceptable pressure on the local parking situation.*

Steven Roberts (Planning) introduced the report. He reminded members that there had been 2 late comments, one of which he had already circulated by email to members of the Committee and one which he submitted at the meeting (attached). In answer to questions from members of the Committee, the following additional information was provided:-

- (1) The Grove House Club was a private members' club rather than a community facility. In any case, the use of premises ceased when the building was demolished;
- (2) The dimensions of roof terraces varied between 4.8m and 6.4m by 1.3m;
- (3) The smallest bedroom in the 4-bed house measures 3.4m by 3.2m;

Speakers Against

Pamela Gibson and Anne Routledge spoke against the application and made the following points:-

- The proposed communal garden is a small, dark area – it is an inadequate community space;
- Roof terraces are not suitable for children;
- This is substandard family housing;
- The Local Plan gives dimensions for gardens which these do not meet;
- The current building has not been completely demolished yet;
- There is a need for 2 bedroom houses – these could be provided on this site with bigger gardens and off-street parking, and this would blend in better with the rest of the street
- This is overdevelopment of a small site;
- Concern about the lack of parking provision. There is existing pressure on parking in the street;
- The application proposes that new residents of these properties would not be allowed to apply for a parking permit, and banning parking does not reflect the reality of how families live today;
- Consent should be granted only when houses on this site had off-street parking.

Speakers in favour

Henry Venners (Agent for the Applicant) spoke in favour of the application and made the following points:-

- The scheme would complement terraces in the area – the frontage was comparable to other houses nearby;
- The proposal is smaller in height and footprint than the existing building;
- The communal space would be fenced in and would be private, as would the individual gardens;
- There would be little overlooking as there is a large area of separation from Dudley Court at the rear;
- The scheme provides one parking space which would be extended by the demolition of the existing building;
- Oxford is an accessible city, with good public transport services. This development would benefit by not being dominated by car parking;

- This proposal benefits the Council in terms of its Balance of Dwellings policy, in that it provides family housing;
- Demolition of the current building is incomplete, but the building is not usable as it now stands.

The following issues were then clarified in response to questions from members of the Committee:-

- The current parking standards would normally expect 2 parking spaces for a 3 bed house, but much depends on the location. Lower levels would be considered acceptable here as the proposal is within a controlled parking zone (CPZ);
- The conditions could be varied to allow for visitor's permits to be granted to occupants of the houses.
- The development provides for exclusive access to private garden space and a shared communal space which is considered acceptable. Council policy HS20 makes no mention of the requirement for a 10m long garden which must not be communal in developments where there will be children; however 10m is mentioned within the preamble to the policy.
- Condition 3 of the proposal related to building materials;
- The proposal is 20m away from Dudley Court;
- The lack of parking would not be contrary to the Human Rights Act. (HRA). The HRA deals only with rights granted by the act, and parking is not one of them. If there were sound planning reasons to disallow parking, it would not be unlawful to introduce a ban on parking at this development.

Members considered all submissions, both written and oral. Members of the Committee then debated the issues and RESOLVED:-

- (1) To GRANT the planning application with conditions laid out in the planning officer's report,
- (2) To amend condition 17 in order to grant entitlement to visitor parking permits;
- (3) That the Head of City Development be authorised to issue the notice of permission.

20. MINUTES

Resolved to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 31st August 2011.

21. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved to note the following dates:

26th October
 30th November
 22nd December
 25th January 2012
 29th February
 28th March

25th April

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.15 pm